

### ***American Farm Bureau Federation's Honor Recognizes Leadership on Agricultural Issues***

GOSHEN, NY – The American Farm Bureau Federation presented U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) with the "Friends of the Farm Bureau" Award last night. The award is given at the end of each Congress to members with strong records on issues important to farm and ranch families.

"Congressman Hall's commitment to agriculture and rural issues has been outstanding," said Orange County grower and farming advocate Chris Pawelski. "Not only was he at our farms touring the damage in the wake of the flooding but afterward Rep. Hall and his staff began working and have continued to work on solutions to address perpetual flooding of the Wallkill River. Further, Rep. Hall's work on his Conservation on Muck Soils (COMS) program is a hallmark achievement. John saw a need and a problem in current USDA conservation programs for working farms on muck soils and he created an innovative program which he successfully was able to attach to the House version of the latest Farm Bill, an incredible achievement for a freshman Congressperson." Pawelski presented the award to Congressman Hall at the Orange County Farm Bureau Annual "Friend of the Farmer" Dinner on Thursday night.

"This Friends of the Farm Bureau award merely confirms what the farmers of the 19th District have come to learn, Rep. Hall is a hard working, true friend of the farmer, looking out for all aspects of agriculture and rural issues," said Pawelski.

Upon accepting the award, Congressman Hall said, "Agriculture plays a vital role in the Hudson Valley economy. Farmers are the original American small business owners and it's important that we stand up for them in Washington. I am committed to making sure that Hudson Valley farmers in this district receive their fair share of federal support and that we continue to find ways to market the agricultural goods produced here."

This award has not been given to the 19th Congressional District representative since 2002.

This is particularly significant because of the role agriculture plays across the district, particularly in places such as Pine Island, Warwick and Fishkill.

Some key highlights Hall's first term agricultural record include:

- Congressman Hall secured funding for the Army Corps of Engineers to perform a Reconnaissance Study on the Wallkill River Watershed, which runs right through the fertile Black Dirt Region. This study is the first step towards preventing local floods which have severely impacted the region on several occasions in recent years.
- In April 2007 during massive flooding in the region, Congressman Hall visited the Black Dirt Region in Orange County to view the damage, speak to growers, and subsequently wrote to the President asking him to declare it a disaster area.
- Congressman Hall held a Flood Summit in February of 2008 with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Orange County Executive Ed Diana, and area stakeholders to discuss flooding in the region and its effects on local agriculture.
- Congressman Hall fought successfully for the Conservation of Muck Soils Program (COMS) in the House version of the Farm Bill, which aided in farming practices unique to the Black Dirt Region. Although that provision did not make it into the final version, Congressman Hall has vowed to continue to fight for this program in the next Congress.